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MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS,
AND RELATED AGENCIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Received & Inspected

October 3, 2018

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FCC Mailroom

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Commissioners:

As you know, the digital divide leaves more than 19 million Americans without any access to broadband. As a Member of Congress, I take seriously my responsibility to bring affordable and reliable broadband to each of my constituents. While Congress and the FCC have made progress in expanding connectivity in rural areas, I believe we must do more.

In my state, TV white spaces are being leveraged to deliver affordable broadband to rural customers. However, some have expressed frustration that regulatory uncertainty is hindering the needed investments and innovation in TV white space technology that would improve performance and reduce costs. Investment and innovation are key to getting more Americans online.

The FCC has the power to remove the regulatory uncertainty that discourages the development of TV white spaces for broadband. I respectfully urge you to finalize the adoption of appropriate technical rules and ensure sufficient spectrum is available below 700 MHz for unlicensed broadband. I also ask that you consider rules enabling innovative methods for expanding broadband connectivity in hard-to-reach geographic areas.

TV white spaces are helping to bridge the digital divide in Ohio, and regulatory delays should not be the reason more consumers cannot access it. I encourage the FCC to take steps to make the regulatory environment more favorable to this kind of innovation.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

December 28, 2018

The Honorable Tim Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
1126 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

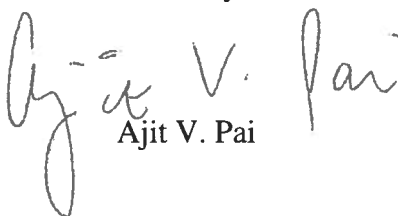
Dear Congressman Ryan:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of affordable and reliable broadband in communities with limited access. Having grown up in rural Kansas, I know what the digital divide is like. That's why closing that divide is my top priority—and one that the Commission is working on all fronts to support. And that's why this year we streamlined rules to deploy the next-generation of wireless connectivity, known as 5G, encouraged carriers to replace aging copper with super-fast fiber on an expedited basis, launched the first auction for millimeter-wave spectrum, increased federal support for our rural healthcare program and for small, rural carriers serving high-cost areas, and held our nation's first reverse auction for fixed broadband support. The results of these actions will be felt throughout America, and especially in rural America, where as you know the case to build out broadband is all the harder for any business to make.

I also agree with you that unlicensed spectrum in the TV white spaces—those channels on which no broadcaster is broadcasting—promises an opportunity for new wireless broadband deployments. That's why I have asked staff to continue working on the many details left unfinished by the prior Administration, including resolution of how to ensure database accuracy. This is no simple task—after all, TV white space devices must fully protect all incumbent services like broadcasting, private land-mobile radio, radio astronomy, and Wireless Medical Telemetry Service. But it is one the Commission's excellent staff is well-positioned to carry out.

Thank you for your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai